

NONFICTION: "The Race Against Death" • SKILL: Reading Comprehension, page 1 of 3

Read, Think, Explain

Identifying Nonfiction Elements

Use this activity sheet with "The Race Against Death." See the Glossary of Nonfiction Terms available at Scope Online for definitions of the words that appear in bold.

Before Reading: Text Features

1. Read the **headline**, or title, on page 4. Write it here: _____

2. Look at the large photo on pages 4-5. What does it show?

3. Look at the "As You Read" box on page 4. What does it tell you to think about as you read?

4. Look at the photos on pages 7 and 8. What do they show? What story do the two photographs tell together?

During Reading: Text Structure

5. Answer the following questions after you read the section "A Deadly Outbreak."

A. Place a check (✓) on the **text structure** that best describes how this section is organized.

Description

Sequence

Problem and
Solution

Cause and
Effect

Compare and
Contrast

B. Explain why you chose the **text structure** that you did. _____

After Reading

6. Write a three- to four-sentence **objective summary** of "The Race Against Death." Think about what you would say to a friend who asks, "What is this article about?"

7. Below are two pieces of **supporting evidence** for a **central idea** of "The Race Against Death." In the space provided, write a central idea that this evidence supports. Then find a third piece of supporting evidence.

Central idea: _____

Evidence #1: "One musher would pick up the medicine at the railroad station in Nenana. Twelve others would wait with their dog teams in villages along the trail." (p. 6)

Evidence #2: "When [Shannon] arrived in Tolovana, his face was black with frostbite. Men rushed out from the roadhouse. They loaded the medicine onto another sled and helped Shannon into the warmth." (p. 7)

Evidence #3: _____

8. Below is another **central idea** of "The Race Against Death." Find three pieces of evidence that support this idea. Include the page numbers they come from.

Central idea: Sled dogs have heightened senses and physical attributes that make them particularly good at their jobs.

Evidence #1: _____

Evidence #2: _____

Evidence #3: _____

9. Sequencing: Number the following from 1 to 6, in chronological order.

Diphtheria medicine is located in Anchorage.	Balto finds his way back to the trail.	A Native Alaskan family arrives in Nome with a sick child.	Seppala sets out with his dogs on his journey to Nulato.	Nome's mayor alerts leaders in Washington, D.C., that the situation is dire.	The last ship of the fall season leaves Nome.
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10. Look at the map on page 6. Then read the claims below. For each, write whether the claim is true or false. Then explain your answer by identifying the **supporting evidence** that proves the claim is true or false.

Claim 1: The distance from Nome to Nenana is approximately 1,000 miles.

This claim is ☐ true ☐ false (check one).

Supporting piece(s) of evidence: _____

Claim 2: Seppala's route took him across frozen water.

This claim is ☐ true ☐ false (check one).

Supporting piece(s) of evidence: _____

11. Consider how the mushers might have felt, knowing that if the medicine didn't get to Nome, hundreds of people would likely die. What experience have you had in which someone depended on you? How did that feeling compare with how you think the mushers felt? Explain. Use text details in your answer.

12. What else have you read in which a character had to solve a major problem like Dr. Welch and the leaders of Nome did? What was the problem, and how was it similar to the one in the article? Use text details in your answer.

